



DHS Today via E-Mail

March 26, 2004

COLA/CLIP UPDATE

Well, spring has officially sprung and that usually means we public servants have two things that seem to loiter in our thoughts, CLIP and COLA. For managers and supervisors CLIP / COLA is especially worrisome because Managers pose the same questions, but with no clear answer to give anxious workers. It would be nice to tell you not to worry, that the economy is abundant, the state budget is thriving and education is taken care of, but the truth is there are too many uncertainties in the near future to give a plain answer. As state employees, we would like to believe that the state education's fiscal crisis has no affect on the business of serving our clients, but the truth is DHS' livelihood is as much in the hands of court appointed masters as the Department of Education's fate. No, not directly, as the courts are not placing mandates directly onto DHS. But imagine you and a friend each have five dollars but you need seven to buy a meal. Another friend comes along, offers to help, and makes the decision that your friend is in greater need. Since there isn't more money available, part of your five dollars will go to feed your friend, which means your situation has change dramatically. Yes, this is grossly oversimplified to the issue at hand but you can see the decisions made about education affects our business decisions.

Fortunately, the Department remains hopeful that CLIP and COLA can be distributed this fiscal year, but it wouldn't be truthful or fair to give information that may change in the coming weeks. Not to worry though, in the interest of better communication with you, as soon as we have a more definitive answer you'll hear it here first! In the meantime, it cannot be stressed enough that your tremendous contribution to Arkansas citizens continues to change lives and shape our state. Proudly serving more than *one million Arkansans* each year....and counting.

Julie Munsell
Director of Communications

DCFS USES MENTORING TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

By Earlesha Butler

The Use of mentors improve supervisory practice and increase worker retention, according to a study by the Department of Human Services Children and Family Services Division.

The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education printed the division's study in its summer and fall 2003 issue. The study, "The Arkansas Mentoring Family Service Worker Supervisors Project: Process and Outcome Evaluation" highlights the impact of relationships between supervisors and employees. Supervisory relationships affects employees job performance, satisfaction, staff turnover and client outcomes, according to the study. The division also helped propose a research model of supervision, which includes international and educational parts.

Debbie Shiell, primary coordinator of the research project, said supervisors selected from three areas in the state were placed in experimental and control groups to form an evaluation. Shiell said experienced mentors were used in the research process to teach supervisor skills, including how to support and teach workers techniques needed when working with families.

"These supervisors are the backbone of their agencies," she said. "They are overworked."

Shiell said the division will receive \$175,000 over a four-year period in result of completing the research project's model and evaluation. The project allows the division to display positive information about DHS, she added.

"One of the things that's important is getting this information out to the public...you also want to see some things that are important to the field staff - put something positive out about the agency," Shiell said.

Mentoring is only one of several tools DCFS utilizes to improve outcomes. The Division is also participating in an accreditation process that would allow the department to further enhance services to Arkansas families. Congratulations DCFS!

DHS AROUND THE STATE

The Good Life: *'Living Longer and Loving It'*

On Friday, April 2, the Baptist Health Medical Center will host the Arkansas Gerontological Society Annual Conference in the JA. Gilbreath Conference Center. Registration and Breakfast will be from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Topics will include: Legals Issues and Aging; Becoming a Better Consumer in the World of Drug Prescriptions; Nutrition Strategies for Successful Aging;

Hearts and Minds in Motion; Nursing Topics; Aging Well in the 21st Century; Mental Health; Medicare Prescription Program; Volunteering with the Silver-Haired Legislature; and Well on Your Way to Fitness. Scholarships are available. To find out more about the scholarships, contact Joyce Credit by dialing 501-852-8422. Social Work and Nursing Home Administration CEU's are available on a limited basis. The registration deadline is Monday, March 29th. If you have further questions, you may contact Sandy Bollen, Division of Volunteerism, 501-682-6717.

Changes/Transitions

Marsha Smith is the new **County Administrator** for **Saline County, Division of County Operations**. Before taking this position, Marsha served as the DHS Client Advocate in the DHS Director's Office.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

March 27th - Diabetes Walk, Murray Park, Check-In 8:00 a.m., walks begins at 9:00. For more information, call 1-888-DIABETES.

April - Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 2nd - Arkansas Gerontological Society Annual Conference, Baptist Medical Center

April 30th - The Qualities of A Leader Workshop, The Church at Rock Creek, Live Simulcast, for information call 225-8654

May 6th & 7th - Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center 8th Annual Open Horizons Conference

May 27th - The 18th Annual Arkansas Women's Conference, The C.A. Vines 4H Center in Ferndale. Cost is \$50 per person. Keynote speaker will be Sarah Victory on "Life Victories". For more information, go to www.arkwomensconf.homestead.com



Do you have something you'd like to share in the newsletter? Send e-mail to Julie.Munsell@mail.state.ar.us or Ingrid.Green@mail.state.ar.us. Send a fax to (501) 682-6836 or call (501) 682-8650.

